



# CAPITOL NEWS

FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE 21ST MICHIGAN SENATE DISTRICT

JULY 2005

**LEGISLATION WOULD PROVIDE FOR RESPONSIBLE REGULATION OF WINE SHIPMENTS.**

Legislation has been introduced in the Michigan Senate and House that would allow consumers to receive direct shipments of wine while protecting minors and addressing tax concerns. Senate Bills 625 through 628 (I introduced Senate Bill 628) and House Bills 4987 through 4990 would maintain Michigan consumers' access to direct-shipped wine while providing a mechanism for the collection of sales taxes and keeping wine out of the hands of minors. It also would establish penalties for violators of the proposed legislation. The Supreme Court recently struck down laws in Michigan and New York that allowed in-state wineries to ship wine to consumers while banning shipments from outside the state.

**BEST WAY TO KEEP ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OUT OF HANDS OF MINORS.**

Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers support House Bill 4959 which would ban a wine maker from directly shipping wine to any person in the state for personal consumption or for any noncommercial purpose. Also, a brewer who manufactures less than 200,000 barrels a year would no longer be eligible for licensure as an SDM which allows a licensee to sell beer and wine for off-premises consumption. Distributors say that using the system currently in place is the best way to prevent sales of wine and beer to underage drinkers.



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**SEX OFFENDER E-MAIL NOTIFICATION BILL PASSES.** The State Senate has approved a bill that would let residents be notified by e-mail when a sex offender moves into their zip code area. Under this legislation, people could sign up for a free e-mail notification service aimed at providing the most up-to-date information about potentially dangerous sex offenders moving into their neighborhoods. Senate Bill 128 has passed and has been sent to the House for further consideration.

**JUNIOR ROTC LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW.** A new Michigan law will allow schools to count their Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps classes as instructional time. Senate Bill 77, now Public Act 41 of 2005, would waive the requirement that JROTC instructors have to be state certified in order for classes they teach to count towards instructional time. JROTC instructors, all of whom served in the military, are qualified to teach based on military standards. For years, this type of instruction has been considered as instructional time. This practice was recently challenged, leaving the future of some programs in jeopardy. The new law makes it easier for schools to continue offering JROTC classes.

**DRUG USE COULD FACTOR INTO CHILD CUSTODY DECISIONS.** Under legislation I sponsored, Senate Bill 535, judges could use a parent's substance abuse problem or substance abuse convictions when determining child custody. The bill would amend the Child Custody Act to add "controlled substance abuse or commission of a controlled substance offense" to the list of factors used in determining the best interests of a child in custody battles.

**WANTED: THE MOST MEMORABLE CARS FROM THE PAST CENTURY.** To mark their 100th anniversary, the Michigan Department of Transportation invites you to go *Cruisin' Through the Century*. This special car show will celebrate the best each model year had to offer, from 1905 to 2005. This show will feature antique cars, muscle cars, one-hit wonder cars, luxury cars—even the kind of car grandma drove. We're looking for an AMC Pacer and an Iroc-Z, and everything in between. Gremlins, wood grain station wagons, decked out Corvettes and Mustangs, classic T-birds and Cadillacs—they're all welcome! The historic show will take place this Labor Day weekend at the Little Bear Arena in St. Ignace, Michigan. Only 100 vehicles will be selected to participate. If you think your car is the one we need, let us know! This event is sponsored by MDOT and the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce. Submit an application at the following web site:

[http://michigan.gov/documents/MDOT\\_Cruisin\\_carshow\\_application\\_123077\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/MDOT_Cruisin_carshow_application_123077_7.pdf)

**COMMON RETAIL DRUG PRICING IN MICHIGAN: TOP PRESCRIBED DRUGS IN MICHIGAN.**

In Michigan the high cost of prescription drugs continues to be a major issue for everyone. In the interest of providing information to consumers to help them make good choices about the purchase of much-needed prescription drugs, Michigan has developed a new resource to help make decision making easier. The Department of Community Health's web page shows the average prices for the top 25 most commonly used prescription drugs, as reported to the state by First Health Services Corporation. You could be paying between 5% and 50% less for these medications by using generic drugs or by belonging to a discount program. More information on drug discount programs can be found by calling one of the numbers listed here.

<b>1-866-755-6479</b> <b>MiRx Prescription</b> <b>Savings Program</b>	<b>1-800-444-4106</b> <b>Together Rx</b> <b>Access</b>	<b>1-888-477-2669</b> <b>Partnership for</b> <b>Prescription Assistance</b>
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The prices listed on the web site represent the **average and usual customary** price for a 30-day supply of medication, in the most commonly prescribed dosage. The "usual and customary" price should be comparable to what a cash-paying customer without insurance would pay. This price does not include discounts that a pharmacy may offer to seniors or for other reasons. Prescription drug prices usually vary daily, so the price that you find at your pharmacy may not be the same price that appears here. It is always a good practice for consumers to buy all of their medications from the same pharmacy so that a pharmacist can keep track of the medications they are taking in order to avoid potentially harmful interactions. If you do shop at more than one pharmacy, be sure that you tell the pharmacists all of the drugs you are taking. For further information, visit the Department's web site listed here.

**<http://michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132--117767--,00.html>**

**AGRICULTURE TOURISM ADVISORY COMMISSION.**

In recent years, the state's agricultural tourism industry has grown dramatically. These agricultural tourism enterprises blur the line between a strictly agricultural operation, such as traditional crop production, and a more entrepreneurial business enterprise, which presents certain problems with how they are treated under the law. Many agricultural tourism enterprises in rural areas of the state have been burdened with certain zoning restrictions that have inhibited the expansion of these farming operations into new markets. It has been suggested that a commission be established to identify barriers to agricultural tourism and recommend ways to foster the development of agricultural tourism enterprises. Senate Bill 225 would create a new act to establish the Agricultural Tourism Zoning Advisory Commission within the Department of Agriculture. "Agricultural tourism" would be defined as the practice of visiting an agribusiness, horticultural, or agricultural operation, including farms, wineries, or companion animal or livestock shows, for the purpose of recreation, education, or active involvement in the operation.

***INCENTIVES OFFERED FOR NEW HIGH-TECH FIRMS.*** The Michigan Senate has passed legislation that offers incentives to new high-technology start-up companies. This legislation would help diversify Michigan's economy and promote job creation. One part of the legislation would create tax incentives to "angel investors" or individuals who provide initial start-up funds for new firms. They get involved long before institutional investors or venture capitalists get involved. During hearings on the legislation, one leader of a high-tech firm in Ann Arbor testified that too often new Michigan businesses are encouraged to leave the state by the venture-capital firms. Another part would remove a disincentive new high-technology firms have when trying to grow and invest. Small technology companies would be exempted from fees based on the number of stock shares they authorized. Under existing laws, start-ups are hit with high fees—\$35,000 on 30 million authorized shares—at a time when few of the companies have cash. That disincentive encourages companies to locate in another state.

***BILL WOULD GIVE FATHERS ADDITIONAL LEGAL RIGHTS.***

Biological fathers would get additional legal rights in certain situations under legislation introduced last week in the Michigan Senate. Senate Bill 436 would expand the legal definition of a child born out of wedlock to include children conceived by someone other than the man married to their mother. This change would give biological fathers access to the legal system to establish paternity of a child regardless of the mother's marital status. Under the legislation, a biological father would need to file a claim within one year of the child's birth. Under current law, when a married woman gives birth, the father of the baby is presumed to be the woman's husband. Several recent court cases have shown that this is not always the case.

***BAN ON INTERNET HUNTING.*** Legislation to ban the practice of computer-assisted remote hunting has been approved and sent to the House for further consideration. The three-bill package would make it illegal for an individual to hunt using a computer to remotely control a firearm or crossbow or to operate a facility offering such an opportunity. The legislation also establishes penalties for violators of the proposed legislation. First-time offenders would be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to 93 days, a fine of up to \$500, or both. Subsequent violations would be a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to one year, a maximum fine of \$1,000, or both.

***GHOSTLY SALT CITY BENEATH DETROIT.*** Some estimates suggest that there is enough salt in the Metro Detroit underground to last 70 million years. Did you know that this gigantic salt mine, that lies underneath Dearborn's Rouge complex, much of Melvindale, and the north end of Allen Park, is 1,200 feet beneath the surface and spreads out over more than 1,400 acres with 50 miles of roads? The mine shaft opening is in Detroit. The International Salt Mine Company operated salt mines until 1983 when failing salt prices brought a halt to production. (*Detroit News*) To learn more: <http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=17&category=business>